

THE BLACK VULTURE IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND MARYLAND.

There are so few records of the black vulture (*Coragyps urubu*) in the District of Columbia and Maryland that the following notes will be of interest. On February 21, 1917, a black vulture appeared among the wild resident turkey vultures in the National Zoological Park, Washington, D. C. As commonly the case with birds of the species, it was quite tame; and curiously enough it soon found the large, open cage in which two black vultures from the South are kept. It remained in the Park until March 10, watering with the turkey vultures at a puddle in the elk pasture and spending a large portion of each day near the buildings about the black vulture cage, where food was provided for it. This record has an added interest because Dr. C. W. Richmond tells me that an adult female specimen of the black vulture was shot at Perryman, Harford County, Maryland, about February 8 or 9, and was received fresh at the United States National Museum February 10, 1917, from Mrs. John T. Lear of that place.

—N. Hollister.

THE SALAMANDER GENUS *RANODON* IN NORTH AMERICA.

The discovery just announced by Miss Helen Thompson Gaige (Occ. Pap. Mus. Zool. Univ. Michigan, No. 40, May 30, 1917) of a new species of *Ranodon* occurring in the Olympic Mountains of Washington, almost rivals in interest that of *Ascapheus truei*, the only representative of the Old World bell-toad family, the Discoglossidae, in the same region eighteen years ago.

Ranodon belongs to the family Ambystomidae, which is so well represented in North America, but more particularly to the section typified by the genus *Hynobius*, which is almost confined to Eastern temperate Asia. The most startling circumstance, however, connected with this new American salamander which has received the name *Ranodon olympicus* is that the genus *Ranodon* in Asia, so far as known, is confined to the western part of that continent. It is in fact the most western genus of the family, if we except the more northern *Salamandrella* which occurs from the Ural to the Pacific coast, and *Hynobius* which is also represented in Turkestan by a species. I wish to emphasize and elaborate this point because the habitat of *Ranodon sibiricus* is generally, but quite erroneously, stated to be Eastern Siberia and Northeastern China. As far as I know, *Ranodon sibiricus* has not as yet been found east of 85° E. Long. Greenw., and seems to be confined to the western foothills of the Thian-Shan, Ala-tau and Altai mountain ranges, in one locality, at least, reaching an altitude of 6000 feet. Its center of distribution appears to be Semiritchensk, the "land of the seven rivers" between lakes Balkash and Issyk-kul. The type came from Semipalatinsk; Severzof records it from near Viernoye, Ballion from Kopal, and Kulagin from Tashkent, all in Russian Turkestan; Strauch and Nikolski mention specimens in the St. Petersburg Academy from Kulja, in Chinese territory not far

from the Turkestan boundary. Thus, in spite of its name, it seems to belong rather to the Turanian than to the Siberian fauna.

The possibility that this species may be discovered further east is not to be denied, and no far-reaching conclusions should be drawn from its apparent absence in Eastern Asia. The fact that an *Onychodactylus* has recently been discovered on the mainland and an *Hynobius* in Turkestan as well as the finding of *Ranodon olympicus* in our own hemisphere ought to be warning enough.

As this genus has now obtained a place in the North American fauna, it is desirable to place on record its nomenclatorial status as well as that of its two species.

Ranodon KESSLER.

1866.—*Ranodon* KESSLER, Bull. Soc. Natural. Moscou, vol. 39, p. 130 (monotype, *R. sibiricus*).

1882.—*Ranidens* BOULENGER, Cat. Batr. Grad. Brit. Mus., p. 36 (emendation).

1. *Ranodon sibiricus* KESSLER.

1866.—*Ranodon* (*Triton*) *sibiricus* KESSLER, Bull. Soc. Natural. Moscou, vol. 39, pt. 1, p. 130, pl. 7 (type-locality, Semipalatinsk, western Siberia).

1868.—*Ranodon kessleri* BALLION, Bull. Soc. Natural. Moscou, vol. 41, pt. 1, p. 138 (type-locality, Kopal, Turkestan).

2. *Ranodon olympicus* GAIGE.

1917.—*Ranodon olympicus* GAIGE, Occ. Pap. Mus. Zool. Univ. Michigan, No. 40, May 30, 1917, p. 2, pl. 1 (type-locality, Lake Cushman, Olympic Mts., Washington). —Leonhard Stejneger.